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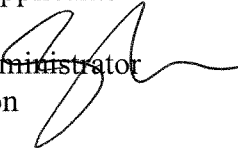
HENRY OLIVA
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
810 Richards Street, Suite 400
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

October 28, 2005

MEMORANDUM

TO: Purchase of Services Applicants

FROM: Amy Tsark, Acting Administrator
Social Services Division 

SUBJECT: ADDENDUM TO REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL ISSUED OCTOBER 10, 2005

Attached for your information is an addendum to the Request for Proposal HMS301-42 that was issued on October 10, 2005, by the Social Services Division of the Department of Human Services (DHS). The purpose of the addendum is to share policy announcements that affect the operationalization of this contract.

If you have questions regarding this RFP, please contact Suzanne Hull at 586-5669. Thank you for your interest in this procurement.

Attachments

Child Welfare Services Branch	HAWAII DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES POLICY ANNOUNCEMENT	
	Policy No: PA 2005-5	Issuance Date: 06/13/05
	Subject: SUPPORTING, STRENGTHENING, AND MAINTAINING FAMILY CONNECTIONS THROUGH KINSHIP PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN ACTIVE WITH CHILD WELFARE SERVICES BRANCH (CWSB)	

POLICY DIRECTIVE

The 2004 Casey Family Programs' Breakthrough Series Collaborative Framework with Public Child Welfare Agencies has identified that family relationships are enduring and offer permanent resources to their own members as a foundation principle on supporting kinship care. Research, cited by the National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice and Permanency Planning, show that connection with birth parents and siblings is essential for children and that the majority of young adults who grow up in foster care have contact with their biological family as young adults.

A key finding of the 2003 Federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) on Hawaii's child welfare system indicated that CWSB did not achieve substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2: *The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children*. The CFSR also found that CWSB "was not consistent in its efforts to preserve connections between children and their families or to seek and assess relatives as placement resources, although this is mandated in State policy."

This policy directive affirms CWSB's policy to seek and assess relatives or kin as foster, adoptive, and/or permanent placement resources for children under the Department's voluntary, court-ordered foster or permanent custody and that relatives or kin placement is preferred to maintain family connections.

- "Kin" is defined as both maternal and paternal relatives, adult siblings, or individuals not biologically or legally related to the family, including but not limited to family friends, hanai caregivers, or family pastor or minister, but who are, nevertheless, perceived as "family" by the children and/or their family members.
- When children are unable to be maintained safely in their own family homes, **on-going** efforts shall be made by CWSB staff to identify, explore, encourage, pursue, locate, and offer support and assistance to kin as a foster, adoptive, and/or permanent placement resource. CWSB staff **shall** utilize Ohana Conference to locate kin.

- In the absence of safety factors, as defined in accordance with the CWSB Differential Response Intake Assessment, placement with kin meeting CWSB licensing requirements **shall be a priority** in order to maintain family connections and as a permanent resource for children.
- CWSB staff shall assist kin by encouraging and expediting the paperwork and placement process, including but not limited to child-specific foster parent application and home study, inter-island home study request, interstate compact home study request, adoptive home study request, transition visits, and/or courtesy supervision of placement.
- Kinship placement requires a realignment of relationships for birth parents, children, family members, and their kin. The process of realignment and transition may be difficult for everyone, and therefore services and supports shall be provided by CWSB staff and providers during this process and for the duration of the kinship placement.
- In any court proceedings relating to foster, adoptive, and/or permanent placement, CWSB staff shall recommend placement with kin meeting CWSB licensing requirements, as defined above, unless confirmation of a safety factor, as defined in accordance with the CWSB Differential Response Intake Assessment, is made by CWSB staff.

Child Welfare Services Branch	HAWAII DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES POLICY ANNOUNCEMENT	
	Policy No: PA 2005-6	Issuance Date: 07/01/05 Amended: 09/02/05
	Subject: MAINTAINING AND ENHANCING FAMILY CONNECTIONS VIA VISITATION FOR CHILDREN UNDER VOLUNTARY, COURT-ORDERED, AND PERMANENT CUSTODY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES	

POLICY DIRECTIVE

Background:

Research on family connections and visitation cited by the National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice and Permanency Planning have shown that frequent, purposeful and consistent visitation for children in foster care constitutes best practices in child welfare. These practices are as follows:

- Visitation helps maintain the parent-child connection and preserves the continuity of the relationship.
- More frequent parent-child visitation is associated with shorter placements in foster care and children more likely to be returned to their parents' care.
- Decreases a child's behavioral problems in foster care when visits are provided on a regular basis.

A key finding of the 2003 Federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) on Hawaii's child welfare system indicated that Child Welfare Services Branch (CWSB) did not achieve substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2: *The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children*. The CFSR found that CWSB "was not consistent in its efforts to preserve connections between children and their families" and that visiting with parents and siblings in foster care is an area needing improvement.

This policy directive affirms CWSB policy that all children in out-of-home placement shall maintain connections, including but not limited to, face-to-face visits, phone calls, letters, cards, school functions, church service, and/or family celebrations with their birth parents and siblings who are not placed with them, other family members, and their family support network.

The purpose of this policy directive is to focus on face-to-face visits and to clarify procedures to ensure the safety and well-being of the child during these visits. Visits are to promote positive, safe and non-blaming connections between the child, his/her parents, caregivers, siblings or other important people in the child's life. In **all** cases, especially sex abuse, safety is paramount and shall be considered in structuring the visits. **Permitting or withholding visits shall never be used as reward or punishment for the parent or the child**

PA 2005-6

Issuance Date: 07/01/05

Amended on 09/02/05

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Process to Ensure Visitation:

Visits shall occur in the least restrictive, most home-like setting or natural family events, including but not limited to, school activities, sports events, or religious services, and not at CWSB offices unless a closely supervised, structured, and monitored environment is warranted to maintain the child/dren's safety.

In addition to visits supervised by CWSB staff or service providers, staff shall encourage birth parents to identify and submit a list for CWSB approval of responsible individuals, including but not limited to relatives, family friends, church members, or community leaders, who are able to supervise and monitor visits without CWSB supervision.

CWSB staff shall involve all the parties, including but not limited to, birth parents, foster parents, guardians-ad-litem, family members, the child/ren, therapists for parents and/or child/ren, and individuals who are approved to supervise visits, in developing a written visitation plan. Ohana Conferencing is recommended to assist in developing visitation plans. CWSB staff shall provide copies of the visitation plan and inform all parties of their responsibilities.

Parents shall continue to be required to confirm visits ahead of time. Multiple "no-shows" by parents will result in visits being "pended" by CWSB until parents can demonstrate to the assigned worker their ability to follow through by keeping appointments.

Supports and therapeutic services shall be provided by CWSB to the child/ren, parents, and/or foster parents in order to facilitate, promote, and maintain ongoing family connections.

Process to Suspend or Terminate Visitation:

Any suspension or termination of visitation shall have the **written prior approval** of the Section Administrator, including a complete explanation in writing as to why visitation should be suspended or terminated and for how long. Guardians-ad-litem should be immediately informed of any suspension or termination of visitation. Ohana Conferencing is required prior to or as soon as possible after suspending or terminating visitation to reconvene all parties in developing a new visitation plan.

A specific visitation "event" may be cancelled immediately prior to or during the event if the child's safety and emotional well-being are threatened. Guardian-ad-litem is to be immediately informed of the canceled visit. Document the cancellation and reason for cancellation in CPSS.

Child Welfare Services Branch	HAWAII DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES POLICY ANNOUNCEMENT	
	Policy No: PA 2005-7	Issuance Date: 09/02/05
	Subject: Standards for Kin Placement of Children Under the Department of Human Services' (DHS) Placement Responsibility	

POLICY DIRECTIVE

PA 2005-5 Kinship Placement (06-13-05) reaffirms DHS policy to seek and assess kin as foster, adoptive, and/or permanent placement for children under the Department's custody. In the absence of safety factors, as defined in accordance with the CWSB Differential Response Intake Assessment, placement with kin meeting CWSB licensing requirements **shall be a priority** in order to maintain life-long and enduring family connections and as a permanent resource for children. Kin is defined as both maternal and paternal relatives, adult siblings, or individuals not biologically or legally related to the family, including but not limited to family friends, caregivers, or faith leader, but who are, nevertheless, perceived as "family" by the children and/or their family members.

DHS assumes placement responsibility for children due to maltreatment as defined in the Child Protective Act, Hawaii Revised Statutes, Chapter 587. In the absence of any statutory definition or guidelines for "the best interests of the children" in §587-1, CWSB staff shall apply the following Safe Family Home Guidelines' (SFHG) factors in §587-25 when using "the best interests of the children" in assessing and selecting kin as foster and/or adoptive placement:

- Are there perpetrators of harm and/or threatened harm in the home?
- Whether there is a confirmed history of abusive or assaultive conduct by the kin?
- Whether there is a confirmed history of substance abuse by the kin?
- Whether the kin has the ability to protect the child from further harm and to ensure that any current protective orders are enforced?
- Whether there is a support system or extended family and/or friends available to the kin?
- Whether the kin has an understanding and willingness to utilize services recommended to effectuate a safe home for the child?
- Whether the kin has the ability to adequately parent the child especially in the areas of communication, nurturing, child development, perception of the child and meeting the child's physical and emotional needs?

All child placement decisions are subject to Family Court review. This policy directive does not interfere with the Family Court's discretion to decide what is in the best interests of the children, nor does it apply to guardians-ad-litem. This policy directive applies only to CWSB staff representing the position of DHS.

Placement planning shall commence within one week of the identified kin meeting CWSB licensing requirements and assessment criteria as defined in the above referenced SFHG factors. When planning for and transitioning children to kin placement, the assigned worker shall include all parties, including but not limited to birth parents, the child, siblings, family members, existing foster parents, guardian-ad-litem, therapist, and/or other significant individuals in the child's life. CWSB supervisors are responsible to ensure that the transition process is completed expeditiously.

Child Welfare Services Branch	HAWAII DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES POLICY ANNOUNCEMENT	
	Policy No: PA 2005-8	Issuance Date: 09/19/05
	Subject: PERMANENT PLAN APPROVAL	

POLICY DIRECTIVE

PA 2005-5 Kinship Placement (06-13-05) reaffirms the Department of Human Services' (DHS) policy to seek and assess kin as foster, adoptive, and/or permanent placement for children under the Department's custody and that kin placement **shall be a priority** to maintain life-long family connections. Kin is defined as both maternal and paternal relatives, adult siblings, or individuals not biologically or legally related to the family, including but not limited to family friends, caregivers, or faith leader who are, nevertheless, perceived as "family" by the children and/or their family members. To ensure compliance with DHS position and policy and PA 2005-5, CWSB staff shall abide by the following process:

1. All Permanent Plans (PP) must be reviewed, approved, and signed by the assigned Section Administrator (SA) on behalf of the Department and a signed copy must be faxed to the Program Development Administrator for review **PRIOR TO and no later than** five (5) working days before submission to and/or filing with Family Court.
2. All PP must clearly identify and list all DHS efforts to pursue, locate, and engage kin, meeting CWSB licensing requirements, as a permanent placement. The search for kin, including Ohana Conferencing with maternal and paternal family members, shall continue throughout the life of a case to locate kin until adoption, legal guardianship, or permanent custody is awarded. Consent from the birth parents is **NOT** needed to convene an Ohana Conference.
3. Risk-adopt placements of newborns with non-kin is prohibited unless approved by the assigned SA after DHS efforts, including Ohana Conferencing with maternal and paternal family members, have been exhausted and failed to locate suitable kin as defined in PA 2005-5 Kinship Placement (06-13-05) and PA 2005-7 Standards for Kin Placement (09-02-05). All unsuccessful efforts by DHS to locate suitable kin shall be documented and reported to the assigned SA for monitoring.
4. Once a PP is approved, changes to the PP are not allowed when a case is transferred to another worker, unit, or section, unless the change is approved by the SA either (a) when a confirmation of safety factor against the proposed permanent caretaker(s) is made by CWSB staff, as defined in accordance with the CWSB Differential Response Intake Assessment, or (b) the child/ren's removal is requested by the proposed permanent caretaker(s).